

Children's Committee 2/21/13, Support of HB 6329 and HB 5566

My name is Karen Laski. I live at 279 Fern St. in Manchester. I am on the Board of CT Votes for animals and have been involved with animal welfare for over 40 years. I have tutored children in alternative education programs in Hartford and for 25 years I worked with truancy issues and security at Manchester High School.

I support HB 6329 An Act concerning Dissection Choice because I believe that an ethical decision has to be made by the person involved. I also support HB 5566 to restrict placement of leg-hold traps near children. A child could suffer severe physical injury or be psychologically affected from seeing this cruel device in action.

Years ago, my teenage friend proudly adopted a dog from the pound. We fell in love with this sweet dog named Susie. That fall, Charlie took Susie on a walk in the woods near his home. Susie stepped into a leg-hold trap. Charlie couldn't release her paw from the trap's steel jaws. He carried his beloved dog to the car while trying to keep her paw attached and also keep the trap from dangling. She died in his arms on the way to the Vet. This trauma still endures.

People who have used leg-hold traps have spoken about its devastating outcomes. Here is a quote from the former Supervisor of the Animal Damage Control program at the USDA. "Even though I was an experienced, professional trapper, my trap victims included non-target species such as bald and golden eagles, a variety of hawks and other birds, rabbits, sage grouse, pet dogs, deer, antelope, porcupines, sheep and calves. The leg-hold is inherently nonselective...my trapping records show that. For each target animal I trapped, about two unwanted individuals were caught" (1996) Domestic cats weren't mentioned, but they are another animal frequently caught and hurt or killed.

In addition to this bill offering children some protection from physical or emotional harm, I think this bill may give us a chance to consider kinder approaches to living with wildlife. Humane animal control is available to us by a simple look at the yellow pages. Information on alternatives to trapping and strategies to deal with so-called nuisance wildlife is online or by consultation with humane experts such as Laura Simon.

Leg-hold traps are archaic and cause excruciating pain. Cruelty does not become less cruel because it is marketed as a convenient management tool. Trap free zones can give us all some peace. Thank you...